The Pretty Lady

Dilemma Of The Modern Workforce

A Short Story

By

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How To Quote From Books?

Whenever you want to quote something from a book, use the page number, line number and word number.

So, the three basic numbers are,

1. Page Number
2. Line Number
3. Word number

Please note that the “Line Number” in here is the line number of a page. All valid lines should at least include one word in it. Also, line numbering does not count the header, footer or any footnote in that page. So, out of the content of that page, starting with number 1 from top to bottom, any line with at least one word in it, is a valid line.

How To Quote From Books?

Also note that the word number is, the number of the word in a line. In each line, word count starts with number 1 from left to right.

Based on the published versions, there are two additional numbers to consider when quoting from a book. Those are,

1. Edition Number (You may use the ISBN or ASIN if editions have separate numbers)
2. Volume Number

Please read this whole section to the end to read about the explanation on how to use these numbers to quote from a book.

Let's look at basic ways of quoting something from the book. For example, if I want to quote the word "*Book*" in the title of this section, then you may quote it as follows,

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i: Line 1: Word 5*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i:1:5*". This is equal to the word "*Book*".

If you want to quote the whole title of this section at once, then use a word range from the first word to the last word of the title as follows,

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i: Line 1: Word 1 to Page i: Line 1: Word 5*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i:1:1—i:1:5*". This quotation is the same as quoting the sentence: "*How to Quote from Books?*"

In the same way, you may quote as many words, lines and pages as needed at once.

To quote a range of pages, use the following method,

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i to Page vi*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i—vi*". This is equal to the six pages which contain this whole section called "*How to Quote from Books?*".

Similarly, to quote specific pages, you may use the following method (you may include multiple page numbers separated by commas.),

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i, Page vi*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i, vi*". This quote is equal to two pages numbered '*i*' and '*vi*' which contains the first and the last page of this section on "*How To Quote From Books?*". You may also use a combination of comma-separated page numbers and page ranges to quote everything you want at once.

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"*The Pretty Lady: Page i: Line 2 to Page i: Line 3*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i:2—i:3*". This is equal to the first paragraph of this section which has only two lines.

Also, to quote specific lines, you may use the following method (you may include multiple line numbers separated by commas.),

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i: Line 2, Line 3*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i:2,3*". This quote also equals to the two lines which contain the first paragraph of this section. You may also use a combination of comma-separated line numbers and line ranges to quote everything you want at once.

So, the most complex form of a quote you can make with this method is to point to some content in a book that starts with one specific word and ends with another specific word, as follows,

"*The Pretty Lady: Page i: Line 2: Word 1 to Page i: Line 03: Word 8*" or "*The Pretty Lady: i:2:1—i:3:8*". This quote also

equals to the first paragraph of this section which only has two lines.

This manner of quoting will make sure everyone from everywhere refers to the same content of a book while quoting from its content.

If there are multiple editions of a book, then you may also mention the edition number along with the title of the book itself. For example, to quote from the first edition of the book, use the following method,

"*The Pretty Lady—First Edition: Page i: Line 2: Word 1 to Page i: Line 03: Word 8*" or "*The Pretty Lady—1st Ed.: i:2:1—i:3:8*". This quote also equal to the first paragraph of this section called "*How To Quote From Books?*" in the first edition of this book titled "*The Pretty Lady*".

Similarly, if you are reading a split edition, which means a book that is published in multiple volumes, then please refer to the volume number after the edition number. For example, to quote from the first volume of the first edition, use the following method,

How To Quote From Books?

"*The Pretty Lady—First Edition—Volume I: Page i: Line 2: Word 1 to Page i: Line 03: Word 8*" or "*The Pretty Lady—1st Ed.—Vol. I: i:2:1—i:3:8*". This quote also equal to the first paragraph of this section called "*How To Quote From Books?*" in the first volume of the first edition of this book titled "*The Pretty Lady*".

Alternatively, if the editions have separate identification numbers, then you may use the ISBN number or the ASIN number instead of the edition number to quote from a specific edition of the book.

Please note that when the edition number is not present along with the title of the book, consider that quote is from the first edition of the book. Therefore, whoever is quoting from a later edition of the book other than the first edition must include the edition number or edition name along with the title of the book. This is a must when someone is quoting from a book using this method.

About This Book

This is a short story looks into the problems of our modern workforce.

In the author's opinion, competitive result-driven productive workers cannot survive without being burned out or getting stressed and depressed. Eventually, they all have to understand that humans have a limited capacity and any push beyond that is not sustainable in the long run. We all become tired and stressed. Competitive work aggravates that tendency.

The Pretty Lady is one of the many short stories in a short story collection which belongs to another book yet to be published. I hope this short story might draw your attention to the upcoming book and you will become more curious about what the actual book is all about!

About This Book

This is the fifth out of six thought-provoking short stories to be released before the main book. Each short story will reveal and discuss certain aspects of current social issues and trends. Starting from April 2019, each book will be released bimonthly within the first week of the month.

Dedication

I Dedicate This Book To Everyone
And Everything That Is Existing,
Ever Existed And Will Someday
Come Into Existence.

[Author intentionally left this page blank]

The Pretty Lady

Dilemma Of The Modern Workforce

Meanwhile, the pretty lady who interviewed the man having some a self-reflection after the man left the building at the end of the interview. She was thinking about her past and the events that lead to her current job at the company.

She was working for another well-known company before joining this company. She was, in fact, a project manager for that previous company managing a critical project with a small team while she was working there. Following is the story she was contemplating about and it explains how she got into this company and some important advice she received during the transition.

The project manager arrives at the restaurant and directly goes to a table where her team leader is having dinner with a few of his colleagues. She also knows some of them but she didn't recognize the others.

She directly goes to their table and greets the rest she knows. Without waiting her time, she speaks to the team leader in an alluring voice,

[The Pretty Lady]

"Hey there, can I talk to you for a second?"

[The Team Leader]

"Yeah, why not? What is it? Is everything all right?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"Not really can I talk to you in somewhere private?"

[The Team Leader]

"Is it something personal or is it related to the project?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"Unfortunately, it's about the project."

[The Team Leader]

“Then just tell me what it is, there is no need to go somewhere else.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Are you sure?”

[The Team Leader]

“Yes, please.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“There’s something wrong with the project, it doesn’t work as it should”

[The Team Leader]

“Which part are you talking about?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“The reporting module for visualizing monthly data”

[The Team Leader]

“I think we discussed that we are releasing it with the next release but not with this one.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“It is something urgent and client is requesting it with this release.”

[The Team Leader]

“Are you serious right now?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes, I am”

[The Team Leader]

“You understand that we are releasing the current version tomorrow morning, right?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes, I do. That’s why I need your help.”

[The Team Leader]

“Help to do what?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“To finish it before tomorrow morning.”

[The Team Leader]

“You want me to work tonight to finish it before tomorrow morning?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes”

[The Team Leader]

“And you are not joking?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No, I’m not this is serious”

[The Team Leader]

“Serious to who?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Serious to all of us. Can we get this thing done?”

[The Team Leader]

“No”

[The Pretty Lady]

“What do you mean no?”

[The Team Leader]

“I mean no, I can’t do it”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Why not?”

[The Team Leader]

“First, I don’t want to work overnight. Second, even if I do I wouldn’t be able to finish it before tomorrow morning. Even if I finished it somehow, we can’t test it on time and I can’t predict what might go wrong.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I don’t care as long as we include it”

[The Team Leader]

“So, you don’t mind our product getting crashed as long as we include that part?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No, I mean it has to work including this part”

[The Team Leader]

“I will not do it.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“You can ask others to help you with it”

[The Team Leader]

“You are the project manager, why don’t you ask them to come and help?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“You are the team leader, it’s your responsibility.”

[The Team Leader]

“Oh! Really. It’s not my or anyone else’s responsibility to work overnight to finish something that might crash the whole thing. You know me, I don’t want that to happen.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Please help me out with this. This is critical.”

[The Team Leader]

“I said no. You know why?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No”

[The Team Leader]

“Because it’s your screw up, so you have to fix it.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“How come?”

[The Team Leader]

“You didn’t tell the client we moved it to next release, did you?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I expected it to be on this release.”

[The Team Leader]

“Even after we agreed upon to postpone it to next release?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK, what’s your point?”

[The Team Leader]

“I have no point right now other that you should fix your own screw up.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I can’t do that, I can’t contact them now”

[The Team Leader]

“That’s not my problem, does it?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Could you please do this for me?”

[The Team Leader]

“I said no and I won’t do it?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Why?”

[The Team Leader]

“Because you admit that you made a mistake and correct it”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK, I accept that I made a mistake. Now can you please come and help me out with it?”

[The Team Leader]

“No. I knew you made a mistake and you accepting it in front of me is not what I meant by correct it. Go tell that to your boss and the client.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I can’t do that.”

[The Team Leader]

“Why?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I just can’t do that.”

[The Team Leader]

“I’m asking you why?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Can we talk this in private?”

[The Team Leader]

“No, these people should know this too. Let’s talk here.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Please!”

[The Team Leader]

“I’m sorry but the answer is no. You really want to know why?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No”

[The Team Leader]

“Because this is not the first time you do this.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“What do you mean?”

[The Team Leader]

“Is this the first time you exploit team members to get things done out of the working hours?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I don’t exploit them. This is a one time issue.”

[The Team Leader]

“Oh really? On the 1st of January you asked this guy (he points to a one of two developers sitting at the table) to

come work in the early morning to finish a new year release to please the clients. On another 3 days in a row in mid-January you wanted the team to work extra hours to implement a feature request. On February, just after the last release you asked the designer to work two nights in a row to design mock up screens for something they didn't even want. On March you asked me and this guy hear (he points to the other developer sitting at the table) to work extra hours to release the beta on time. And you are telling me this is the first time you are exploiting the team?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"That's not required, if you have worked enough. When we cannot finish things on time, I have to ask you guys to meet the deadline."

[The Team Leader]

"Oh! Now it's our fault."

[The Pretty Lady]

"No. That's not what I meant."

[The Team Leader]

“Then what exactly did you mean by that?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK, can you do this or not? If not, I have to speak to the boss.”

[The Team Leader]

“No. tell him you screwed up!”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I sure will. We might lose our client tomorrow.”

[The Team Leader]

“So what? You came here and ruined our dinner just because you are afraid of losing your client?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Aren’t you afraid of losing the client?”

[The Team Leader]

“No.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Why not? You might lose your job?”

[The Team Leader]

“Lady it’s your job is on the line, not mine.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“If no client then we all might get fired.”

[The Team Leader]

“I don’t care.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Now what do you want me to do?”

[The Team Leader]

“Go tell the client the truth.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I can’t do that?”

[The Team Leader]

“Why not? What are you afraid of?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“You know exactly what I’m afraid of.”

[The Team Leader]

“OK, you might lose your job, so an income source. Then you might lose a possible good recommendation. Then you might lose your credibility. You might also get ashamed. Other than those things what else would you lose?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Isn’t that all of it? Are you asking me to get myself fired?”

[The Team Leader]

“I’m asking you to accept the truth for this once. I’m trying to do a favour to you.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“What favour that is?”

[The Team Leader]

“I’m trying to make you accept the truth and make you less afraid of losing things that doesn’t matter.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Losing a job matters to me.”

[The Team Leader]

“So, you will lie to your clients, boss and the team. Then exploit the team to get what you want the way you want, just to keep your job?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK, who doesn’t do that?”

[The Team Leader]

“No sane person would do that. I do not expect anyone here to work outside of their working hours. Do you know why?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No”

[The Team Leader]

“Because that is just insane. I don’t want any of these guys to be slaves for money.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Then you won’t survive much longer in this field.”

[The Team Leader]

“Oh! You are telling me that. If you can’t accept the truth and stop exploiting the team members, then you don’t deserve to be a project manager. So, today you will prove to me you are worth to be a project manager.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I don’t have to prove anything to you.”

[The Team Leader]

“If not for me, then prove it to yourself. Do the right thing, just this once.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“What exactly is the right thing here?”

[The Team Leader]

“Accept the truth and tell it to both your boss and he client. I’m helping you here. I’m not helping with your job but I’m helping you with your life. You might hate me for the rest of your life but this is the best help I can do for you for the rest of your life. Accept the truth!”

[The Pretty Lady]

“We’ll see about this tomorrow. If we lose the project, it’s on you.”

[The Team Leader]

“No. It’s on you. You just don’t want to accept it.”

She turned around and walked out of the restaurant. She was angry, and she didn’t even care to look back at them. The team leader and the rest also lost their appetite, and they just talked a few words to each other and left the place soon after. The team leader was mostly silent after that probably thinking of what he has done by humiliating the project manager in front of his friends, especially because she was a female. It was awkward to all of them and everyone else is thinking whether the team leader was a bit too harsh on her.

The morning next day all went to work, and the team arrived at the office just before the start of working hours. According to them, the release was ready and soon after the team leader arrives; the boss asked him to come to his office for a chat. He greeted the boss and went into his room and the project manager was sitting on the other chair in front of the boss’s desk.

[The Boss]

“Come in. Please have a seat.”

[The Team Leader]

“Thanks”

[The Boss]

“Is everything ready for the release today?”

[The Team Leader]

“Yes, everything we agreed upon is ready to release”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Except for the reporting module”

[The Boss]

“Is this true?”

[The Team Leader]

“Yes, that is because the reporting module was not something we agreed upon for this release.”

[The Boss]

“What do you mean? I see that it is on the list.”

[The Team Leader]

“That list is what the client gave to you. However, we agreed during the last project meeting to postpone the reporting module to the next release.”

[The Boss]

“When was this?”

[The Team Leader]

“A few weeks ago. Soon after the last release.”

[The Boss]

“Is this true?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes, we agreed, but it’s not written anywhere.”

[The Boss]

“So, you agreed to postpone it?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes.”

[The Boss]

“Then why didn’t you told me so?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I thought we can make it work and finish everything before the release.”

[The Team Leader]

“You thought?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes. If they were working on the project all the time they are here, then we could have done that. But their productivity is low and they keep wasting time by talking with each other.”

[The Team Leader]

“Excuse me. I’m human, I talk with people I work with.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Yes, but you could have done more if you didn’t.”

[The Team Leader]

“How so?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“You all could have worked during that time. We wouldn’t have to talk about this if you did.”

[The Boss]

“Is this true? Can’t you finish what you do early?”

[The Team Leader]

“Are you asking me to rush things?”

[The Boss]

“In a way yes. If not within today, can you finish it before the end of this week?”

[The Team Leader]

“We might but why rush things. Can’t you just tell them the truth and tell them we’ll be releasing it next time?”

[The Boss]

“We can’t because they expect to generate reports as soon as they can.”

[The Team Leader]

“This is exactly why I don’t want to rush things. We must thoroughly test it before releasing it.”

[The Boss]

‘Can you make it happen within this week?”

[The Team Leader]

“You know what! I can make it happen but in the worst-case scenario no one could read the code, it will be messy and maintenance will be hard. Also, there will be more errors that it should, so you might have to keep fixing issues for the rest of the days. If you want a quality outcome, then let us work on our phase and don’t rush things or ask for a deadline. When it’s done, I’ll let you know. Until then it will be under development. But if you let us do it our way, we will give you the best outcome for this project but if you rush things, then we can’t guarantee that.”

[The Boss]

“OK, how long do you want?”

[The Team Leader]

“I don’t know. It’s not even started yet. Can we just focus on current release and get over with it first? Then we’ll think of the rest. I can’t give you a deadline now. I will tell you when it’s done.”

[The Boss]

“OK, but the client won’t be happy.”

[The Team Leader]

“Can’t you just tell them the truth that humans are working in the project?”

[The Boss]

“OK, keep working on it, we’ll see what we can do.”

[The Team Leader]

“Thanks.”

The release went well, but the client wasn’t happy about not notifying them early about the missing module. After a few days, the project manager got fired, and they put the team under the direct supervision of the chief operating officer. The project manager wasn’t happy at all and she seemed to be angry when she left and didn’t say goodbye

to any of the team members. She didn't even look at the team leader before she left. The team leader was also having second thoughts about it. His actions cause someone to lose her job and he seemed to be secretly blaming himself for what happened.

After a few months, the former project manager comes out of a popular building in the city after an interview with another well-known company. When she was coming out of the door, she saw the team leader form her last company standing in front of the door. He was waiting for her.

[The Team Leader]

"Hey, how are you doing?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"What are you doing here?"

[The Team Leader]

"You still angry with me?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"Oh! Is that why you are here?"

[The Team Leader]

“No, No, I knew you were having an interview here. I just wanted to talk.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Talk about what?”

[The Team Leader]

“Can we go somewhere else and talk?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“No. Let’s talk here.”

[The Team Leader]

“OK then. I can help you with getting this job?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“How?”

[The Team Leader]

“I know them and they’ll take you in if I tell them I know you.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Why do you do that?”

[The Team Leader]

“There’s no reason for it but I’m just saying I can.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Oh! You feel sorry for what you did?”

[The Team Leader]

“Not exactly. You know that you made it happen.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Oh wow. Again this topic.”

[The Team Leader]

“OK. I’m sorry. Just tell me you need this job and I’ll help you out but first, tell me something.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“What?”

[The Team Leader]

“Can you make sure that for the rest of your career in here you’ll do the right thing?”

[The Pretty Lady]

“I always did the right thing.”

[The Team Leader]

“You know what I mean by that. Don’t compromise just because someone on the top has asked you to do something. If you have asked to do something out of the ordinary, just say no and especially if someone tried to exploit you just tell them no.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Okay. What does it have to do with this job?”

[The Team Leader]

“We are cleansing the workforce of any toxins. We don’t let anyone exploit us. If someone tries to we point them out what’s wrong with them regardless of who they are. We are working against people getting stressed and burned out because of deadlines and peer pressure.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Are you guys some a group?”

[The Team Leader]

“Not really. It’s like loosely connected individuals who work against abusing labour force. We systematically cleanse the workforce by gradually eliminating any toxic practices happening within workforces. One example is systematically exploiting labour to work extra hours without extra pay.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“Oh! You mean like what I did earlier?”

[The Team Leader]

“Yeah. That is exploitation too but there are many things to it. Not just that.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK, what do you want me to do?”

[The Team Leader]

“Stand up against anyone who tries to exploit you, regardless of who they are. To do this, first, get rid of the fear of losing things. If you are afraid of losing your job, income, or anything that comes with a job, then you might

do anything they want just to keep the job. So I want you to become free of those concerns and out of fear."

[The Pretty Lady]

"How can someone do that, we all are afraid of losing a job?"

[The Team Leader]

"That is what I'm saying. Stop fearing that. If you lose one, then you can find another. Also, you will have a good strong reason to tell why you lost your job. Normally, you can't lose your job by doing the right thing. That's what they have trained you to believe. You don't have to do everything someone asked to do. You must do the right thing regardless of what they have asked."

[The Pretty Lady]

"If I don't?"

[The Team Leader]

"Then I won't be able to help you again. If you do the right thing, then everyone will know you will do the right thing regardless of what others say. This will make sure they'll

not exploit you and valued and respected as a team member. No matter where you go, this will be true. Even if the managers hate you, your peers will respect you. So, do the right thing and that will make sure you are helping to cleanse the workforce and by doing so making a name as a person who does the right thing all the time."

[The Pretty Lady]

"Fair enough. I can't predict and I can't promise you anything. But I will try."

[The Team Leader]

"It's up to you. This time I'll help you."

[The Pretty Lady]

"What's in it for you?"

[The Team Leader]

"Nothing. We don't help to expect anything in return. If we keep expecting something in return by helping another, we consider it as a failure to help another. Because that is like helping ourselves by helping another. So, after I do this, I have to make sure I don't hold this against you and that I

expect nothing in return from you. You owe me nothing after this and there are no strings attached. I expect you to do the same when you help someone."

[The Pretty Lady]

"That's too good to be true."

[The Team Leader]

"If you want a reason, the think of this as me helping you out because you lost your job because of me. So, after this, we are even and you don't owe me anything and I owe you nothing. How that sounds like?"

[The Pretty Lady]

"That sounds more like it."

[The Team Leader]

"OK, then remember what I said. I'll talk to my friends inside and give a recommendation."

[The Pretty Lady]

"Thanks, I guess."

[The Team Leader]

“Don’t mention it.”

[The Pretty Lady]

“OK then. See you later.”

[The Team Leader]

“Sure, bye.”

As he told her, he asked his friends in that company to consider her for the position and gave an honest recommendation and revealed the true reason she lost the last job. Even though she didn’t remember, one member in the management of this company was there at the table in the restaurant where she asked the team leader to work overnight. This member is a friend of the team leader and he knew the whole story. This is how the team leader knew that she was having an interview there and met her on time before she leaves the area.

After a few weeks, she got the job and apparently since then she has become a tough employee difficult to manipulate. She has become an inspiration for all the others and she worked against the systematic exploitation of people which leaves them stressed, depressed and

burned out. There is no record on how the workforce cleansing has progressed over time but after a few years almost all the software development companies have seems to adopt policies which made employees honest with the management and the clients, all the time, regardless of the outcome. This seemed to have eased the exploitation of labour in software development companies and it also contributed towards reducing the number of people who are getting stressed and burned out because of overwork.

About The Author

Nuwan Wijayaweera (1984) was born in Kurunegala, Sri Lanka. He is a Sri Lankan IT professional who worked for various Sri Lankan and Australian companies since 2008. He wrote posts and articles since 2014 and he has written many blog posts since then. Now he is working on his first major book, which contains logs from his life events and his personal philosophy towards life.